

REMARKS

This responds to the non-final Office Action dated 10 November 2008. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 21-29, 31, 33-37, 40, 42-50, 52, 54, 56, 62-65, 67, and 68 have been amended. Claims 9, 11, 13-20, 30, 32, 39, 41, 51, 53, and 57-61 are cancelled. Support for these amendments can be found variously throughout the specification; including, for example, original claims 32, 41, and 53. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

For simplicity and clarity purposes in responding to the Office Action, Applicant's remarks are primarily focused on the rejections applied to the independent claims (*i.e.*, claims 1, 21, 35, 42, and 62) with the understanding that the dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons that the independent claims are patentable. Applicant expressly reserves the right to argue the patentability of the dependent claims separately in any future proceedings.

Interview Summary

Applicant's Representative thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended in the in-person interview conducted on 7 January 2009. In this interview, the Examiner and Applicant's Representative discussed the outstanding rejections, the scope of the prior art, and amendments to the claims that distinguish the present invention from the prior art of record.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8, 10, 12, 21-29, 31-38, 40-50, 52-56, and 62-68 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 10, 12, and 17 in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the in-person interview and, as such, respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8, 11, 12, 21-29, 31, 33-38, 40, 42-50, 52, 54-56, and 62-68 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,078,956 to Bryant et al. (“Bryant”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,732,218 to Bland et al. (“Bland”).

As agreed upon the in-person interview, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 21, 35, 42, and 62 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 32, 41, and 53. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the allowance of claims 1-8, 11, 12, 21-29, 31, 33-38, 40, 42-50, 52, 54-56, and 62-68.

Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes that each of the presently pending claims in this application is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests a favorable action on the merits. If the Examiner has any further comments or suggestions, Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney to expedite the handling of this matter.

Applicant expressly disclaims all arguments, representations, and/or amendments presented or contained in any other patent or patent application, including any patents or patent applications claimed for priority purposes by the present application or any patents or patent applications that claim priority to this patent application. Moreover, all arguments, representations, and/or amendments presented or contained in the present patent application are only applicable to the present patent application and should not be considered when evaluating any other patent or patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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